



## LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Lexington, Kentucky

### Shelter-In-Place: Safety Tips for Chemical Emergencies

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#### What is Shelter-In-Place?

Fayette County is a safe place to live, work, and play. But emergencies sometimes do happen, including the accidental release of hazardous chemicals into the air, ground, or water.

When this occurs, you and your family can "shelter-in-place" by separating where you are from the dangerous chemicals in the outside air. It offers temporary protection when evacuation is not possible.

This page tells you what to do before, during, and after chemical emergencies. If you have any questions, please call DEEM at (859) 258-3784.

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#### Before a chemical emergency

- Know your area: A chemical emergency can occur anywhere hazardous materials are manufactured, stored or transported. These include factories, chemical plants, highways, and railways. Less obvious sources include golf courses and swimming pools, which often store dangerous chemicals.
- Put together a shelter kit: A kit should contain duct tape for sealing cracks around doors and windowsills; plastic to cover windows; towels and scissors. You may also want to include flashlights, spare batteries, extra food and water, a first aid kit, and a NOAA weather radio. Make sure to keep the kit where you can get it in a hurry.
- Pick a shelter room: Select a room in your home with few or no windows and a telephone. During



Wally Wise is Fayette County's mascot for Sheltering in Place. Wally teaches kids about chemicals and what to do when happen. To have Wally visit your class or receive materials for kids, call the Division of Environmental and Emergency Management.

a chemical emergency, you should only make calls that are absolutely essential. This is because using it can tie up phone lines needed by emergency response officials.

- Know your warning systems: In Fayette County, emergency information can be broadcasted through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Cable Interrupt System, NOAA weather radio, outdoor sirens, CityWatch, local T.V. and radio stations.
- Telephone Warnings: CityWatch is Fayette County's telephone alert system. If there is a chemical emergency in your neighborhood, public officials can use CityWatch to automatically call your home or workplace.
- Outdoor Sirens: Lexington has 25 sirens located in parks throughout the county, which are tested the first Wednesday of each month. When a chemical emergency or tornadoes occurs, a loud siren sound will be played.
- Plan ahead: Make sure all family members know what to do in a chemical emergency, whether they are at home, school, work, or outdoors. Learn CPR and first aid.
- Review your plan: Meet with your family once a year and conduct shelter-in-place drills.
- Learn more: Get more information on how to prepare by calling the Division of Environmental and Emergency Management. We can help you learn more about chemical hazards where you live and work.

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## **When to Shelter**

Officials will advise sheltering in place in any one of these conditions:

- The chemical leak is expected to last for a short time.
- The chemical has a low health hazard and its release does not warrant an evacuation.
- There's not enough time to evacuate.
- Chemical fumes could quickly overtake you if you are outside.

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## **During a Chemical Emergency**

- You may hear about a chemical accident or severe weather conditions through the

System, NOAA weather radio, outdoor sirens, CityWatch, local T.V. and radio stations. These will advise you whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate.

- If officials advise you to shelter-in-place, take your children, any visitors, and pets indoors immediately to the room you've chosen as a shelter.
- If your children are at school, do not leave your home to get them because you could expose yourself to the chemicals. Most schools have emergency plans and know when to shelter-in-place or evacuate.
- Shut off heating, cooling and fans that draw in air from the outside.
- If you have a fireplace, close the damper. Shut and lock doors and windows. Locking makes a better seal.
- Seal cracks around the door and windows with duct tape. If the crack at the bottom of the door is too wide for tape alone, place a towel at the bottom of the door.
- Cover vents and electrical outlets with duct tape.
- Use plastic and duct tape to completely cover any windows.
- Turn on the radio or television to a local station and listen for official reports or instructions.
- Stay off the phone. It should be used for emergency calls only.
- Be prepared to evacuate if ordered to do so by public safety officials. You will be given instructions on how to evacuate.
- Stay tuned until the all-clear message is broadcast.

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### **When Instructed to Evacuate**

- Turn off lights and appliances. Lock all doors and windows.
- Take along your emergency kit and a form of identification.
- Follow evacuations routes specified by officials. Don't use any short cuts.
- Call a designated family contact to say you're all right.
- Do not return home until officials have given the "all clear" message.

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### **What is the LEPC?**

The Fayette Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is made up of government, health officials, media, and Lexington businesses that use, store, or transport extremely hazardous chemicals.

The goal of the LEPC is to educate the community about the potential for chemical emergencies. It works to protect public health, safety, and the environment.

If you would like to learn about the LEPC or find out more on companies with chemicals in your area, contact the Division of Environmental and Emergency Management.